

Art for Dinner
January 17, 2010

To be cooked starting at 6 PM EST, January 17, 2010 and then eaten at home.

Here's what you'll need:

2 acorn squash	1 ¼ cups flour
1 cup couscous	1 tablespoon sugar
1 sweet pepper (like red or yellow)	1/8 teaspoon salt
1 red onion	6 tablespoons butter
1 carrot	1 cup yogurt
some cheese for sprinkling	2 tablespoons kahlua
1 clove garlic	1 pear
1 bundle asparagus	

In small quantities, but more than once, you'll need:
water, olive oil, salt, pepper

1. Standing in your kitchen, inhale and exhale deeply. Rub your hands together to warm them up.
2. Turn on the playlist. Never at any point this evening scoff at my taste in music. [a link to playlist will be available on this blogpost at artfordinner.wordpress.com before the event]
3. Turn the oven to bake at 375 degrees.
4. Get out your cutting board and the biggest knife you can find. Cut both acorn squash in half. With a spoon, scrape the seeds and the stringy squash stuff into the trash. Think about saving the seeds to toast, but decide you never would cook them anyway. Put your clean squash halves out of the way on top of the microwave.
5. Take your asparagus out of the plastic. Rinse the stalks under cold running water. Place them on a dry paper towel.
6. Break the white ends of the stalks off by holding the asparagus with two hands, applying pressure, and moving one hand towards the thicker end until it breaks! This is exciting because you know you broke it at exactly the spot where it gets unsavorily fibrous.
7. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Spread your asparagus out on it, then drizzle them with olive oil until they look pretty coated. If you drop one of the asparagus as you move them to the baking sheet, don't worry. Those germs will sizzle off in the oven. Season them with salt and pepper. Trust yourself to know exactly how much.
8. Look at your vegetables lying there on the counter.
9. Sing along with the song if you know it.
10. Cut the top and the bottom off of the pepper. Turn the middle on its flat side and make one slit down the side. Stretch it down, seeds up, on the cutting board and remove the white stuff, seeds and all, with your knife. Pull the stem out of the top and any white stuff stuck up there too.
11. Dice the pepper in tiny cubes. Dice the bottom but not the top. Eat that as a snack. Slide those cubes to the edge of your board.

Art for Dinner
January 17, 2010

12. Peel the carrot. If there's a suspicious looking nub on it, ignore it. Cut it into half. Cut those halves in half. Cut those halved halves in thin slices. If you "accidentally" cut some slices too thick, eat them. Slide those bits next to the pepper bits.
13. Peel the onion. Dice it.
14. Ditto with the garlic.
15. Grease a pastry dish just to be on the safe side.
16. In a medium-sized mixing bowl, whisk the flour, salt and sugar together. Dice the COLD butter into little cubes. Mash it up with the flour mixture with a fork until its crumbly. Don't worry. This is the hardest part.
17. Add 3 tablespoons water. Mash it with that fork. Just when you think you need to add more water, gather it together with your hands into a flat disc. Move that flat disc to the tart dish, press it down with the palm of your hand lovingly until it is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Pinch the excess dough away into a pretty design like a scallop or other type of seashell.
18. Put it in the oven.
19. Move your squash onto a foil lined baking sheet. Brush them with olive oil. Season liberally with salt and pepper. Trust yourself; you did such a good job with the asparagus, just sitting there reminding you.
20. Heat a medium-sized saucepan on 4 with a little olive oil in the bottom. Add the garlic. When you can smell the garlic, add the onions and carrots and peppers.
21. Put two cups in a small pot and bring to a boil on the stove. Turn the heat off and add one cup of the couscous. Cover it, let it stand for five minutes. Time it. I dare you.
22. Stir your vegetables.
23. Check on the tart shell. Is it golden brown on the edges? If the center puffed up, poke it down with a fork. If the center didn't puff up, don't poke it.
24. When the tart shell starts to look just the littlest bit brown, take it out. (if one were timing, one would say this might take 13-17 minutes). Put it somewhere no one can see it. Let it cool.
25. When you take out the tart shell, put in the asparagus.
26. Season your veggies with (guess what?) salt and pepper. Congratulate yourself.
27. Fluff up the couscous with at fork, set the pan aside.
28. Do some dishes. Dance a little when you dry the big pots or pans.
29. Now that it's been a little while (if one were timing, one would say 15? 20? Minutes), your carrots are tender and your veggies are done sizzling them. Add them to the pot with the couscous and mix it up!
30. Taste your delicious stuffing. Say aloud to yourself "Delicious! But it could use a little ____" Fill in the blank. Then add whatever you said.
31. While you wait, drink a glass of bubbly water and slice your pear extra thin.
32. In a bowl, mix 1 cup lowfat vanilla yogurt with 2 tablespoons of kahlua. Set alongside the pears.
33. When the acorn squash seem tender when poked with a fork, take them out of the oven. Fill the centers with two or three spoonfuls of the couscous stuffing. Dot each squash center with butter and sprinkle – but only if you've got it lying around waiting – some grated parmesan cheese. Put them back into the oven.
34. While you're in there, check on the asparagus. How do they look? PERFECT?! Take them out right away. Transfer them to a plate to serve.

Art for Dinner
January 17, 2010

35. When the tart feels cool enough, move it to a plate with a flat bottom. Fill the tart with the yogurt mixture then arrange your sliced pears however you want on top of the yogurt. Let stand.
36. Your squash should be almost done. You'll be able to tell because the edges will get brown and the squash will be tenderer and don't let the couscous dry out.
37. Take the squash out of the oven and turn the oven off. Serve each squash onto a plate, bring those plates to the table with the asparagus. Set forks, knives, spoons, and napkins at each place. Find drinks.
38. Yell, top of your lungs "DINNER TIME!"
39. Take your seats.
40. Take a photograph with a digital camera and remember to send it to amylehrburger@gmail.com afterward.
41. Someone make a toast.
42. Eat! eat! eat!
43. Warn everyone the squash might be hot.
44. Don't apologize, even if the asparagus are a little stringy.
45. Offer to share the recipes.
46. Make plans to do something again sometime soon. Be more specific.
47. When everyone is finished eating, clear the dirty plates and bring over small clean plates. Cut the tart into 4 pieces. Serve the pieces onto the little plates.
48. Mmm.
49. Once everyone is done eating, clean up. Put away the leftovers in Tupperware. Don't be afraid at having so much couscous left; check back on artfordinner.wordpress.com for a delicious couscous salad recipe.
50. Everyone, all together, say "thank you" like a class of kindergarteners.